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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2018  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [PO](#) [AO](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: URGING PORTUGAL TO ACTION AS  
COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES CHAIR

Classified By: EUR/WE Director Allegrone under E.O. 12958, 1.4(b) & (d)

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraphs 3-5.

SUMMARY

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¶2. (U) Post is requested to approach the MFA at the

appropriate levels to urge their strong leadership of the Community of Democracies (CD) and to solicit their views on priorities for their Chairmanship over the next two years. The U.S. would like the Portuguese to take the initiative in the CD so that the Community truly becomes a global project of many partners. We are pleased that Portugal appears already to be working on reinvigorating the UN Democracy Caucus. The U.S. also looks forward to working in partnership with the Portuguese Embassy in Washington. This cable provides high-level objectives and specific examples and issues to pursue with the Portuguese.

OBJECTIVES

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¶3. (U) Post is requested to pursue the following objectives:

-- Encourage strong leadership from Portugal to strengthen the CD's commitment to its stated values through action. Note that the U.S. stands ready to support Portugal.

-- Solicit GOP views on priorities for the CD during Portugal's Chairmanship. How does Portugal plan to operationalize its chairmanship of the CD process? Who will lead the effort within the MFA?

-- Encourage Portugal to share priorities with the Convening Group and to begin active preparation for the Lisbon Ministerial to occur in 2009.

¶4. (U) If appropriate, post may offer the following three overarching themes, which the U.S. has identified to advance the CD, as well as questions to consider:

-- An action-Oriented Organization. Encourage the CD to undertake action-oriented projects, vice simply participating in talk-shops at both the Working Group level and at the Ministerial. Should the themes of the working groups change, or should more themes be added?

-- Consolidated CD Structures. Establish the Permanent Secretariat to support the Chair and the Convening Group (CG)

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in its work. Institutionalize the role of the

Non-governmental International Advisory Committee. How does Portugal envision improving the CD invitation process and the rules for engagement on the ground at the Lisbon Ministerial?

In October, Portugal asked the U.S. to help identify future chairs for the CD and for opinions on a rotation schedule for the Convening Group. While considering options on rotation of Convening Group members, the U.S. is willing to assist in the identification of future CD Chairs, and has been approached by Lithuania and Mongolia with interest in hosting the CD in 2011 and 2013, respectively. (Note: Mongolia is holding elections in June 2008. MFA State Secretary Bekbat indicated to DRL AA/S Farrar on February 5 that Mongolia will wait to make a final decision on an offer to host until after the new government is elected. Mongolia's preference to host in 2013 rather than 2011 -- when an Asian country should host, according to regional rotation by the Chair -- creates an additional complication. If Mongolia agrees to host, Mongolia should be asked to host in 2011 per past regional rotation order. (Past order has been Europe, Asia, Western Hemisphere, Africa.) End Note.) Has Portugal been approached by any interested parties since October?

-- Multilateral Engagement. We understand that Portugal is starting to think about ways the UN Democracy Caucus can be more effective. Portugal's recent EU Presidency uniquely positions them to lead the CD to take a more active role through the UN Democracy Caucus on democracy and human rights promotion in the UN system. We look forward to working with Portugal on these initiatives, and will be interested in any specific views the Portuguese have with respect to the work of the Caucus, both in New York and elsewhere (such as Geneva and Paris).

**¶5.** (U) Angola's historic elections in September 2008 offer an early opportunity to strengthen the CD's role as an action-oriented organization. Post should encourage the Portuguese to use their tenure as CD Chair to encourage consolidation of Angola's ongoing democratic transition, specifically in holding peaceful, credible elections. Post may draw on the points below in discussing specific activities with the Portuguese.

-- Recalling the CD's role in East Timor's democratic elections, we believe Angola's upcoming legislative elections offer the CD a chance to build its own capacity, while simultaneously making a real impact in strengthening democracy.

-- Portugal, as current Chair of the CD, and because of its historic, cultural, and linguistic ties to Angola, is in an ideal leadership position to guide a strategy for CD outreach to Angola.

-- One suggestion for such a strategy would be to explain the purpose and structure of the CD to the Angolans and offer to help chart a path to Angolan participation as observers at the 2009 ministerial. Angola's participation in the next ministerial would signal to the world its transition to the community of global democracy; a path we hope will lead to full membership as the democratic transition is consolidated.

-- Such a strategy could also include a visit by representatives of the CD to Angola to meet with Government officials responsible for election planning, civil society organizations, opposition parties, and media. The CD's trip would be certain to gain public attention, and would itself bolster the Angolan democratic process.

-- The U.S. supports several NGOs currently working on the ground in Angola (NDI, IRI, IFES), and has a strong relationship with the Independent Electoral Commission. While we would envision Portugal taking the lead in its role as Chair, the U.S. and others, including perhaps Brazil, could be called upon to play supporting roles.

-- We are interested in hearing your thoughts on such a plan to support Angola's transition to democracy. As you know, Angola's historic elections are scheduled for September so

time is a factor.

REPORTING DEADLINE

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¶6. (U) Embassy is requested to report results of efforts by cable to DRL/MLGA Laura Jordan, G Joaquin Ferrao, EUR/WE Kevin Opstrup, and AF/S Chris Karber before February 19.

BACKGROUND

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¶7. (SBU) On February 7 G Staff Joaquin Ferrao and DRL/MLGA foreign affairs officer Laura Jordan met with Portuguese Emboff Bernardo Cunha to inquire after the latest GOP plans for the CD and to preview some of the ideas laid out in this cable. Cunha responded enthusiastically to the idea of CD outreach to Angola, and committed to explore ways in which current Portuguese efforts (and Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) efforts) could be coordinated. Cunha privately suggested the idea of CD coming up with its own elections observation team to send to Angola at their invitation (if that could be obtained), because "the OSCE won't do elections in Africa." Ferrao cautioned Cunha that - beyond the challenge of obtaining Angola's ok for such a mission, as well as turning Angola's attention to the CD - the CD's current capabilities make it doubtful that an observation mission could be organized by September 08. Ferrao offered to consider other concrete ways to reach out to Angola that would be of interest to Luanda, but emphasized the U.S. interest in hearing what ideas the GOP might have and in supporting those initiatives in the background. Cunha appreciated the U.S. desire to take a step to the background in an effort to globalize the CD, and said he would get back to us soon.

¶8. (C//NF) Portugal has created a plan for its role as Chair of the CD, including a request for an Ambassador-at-Large, a travel budget for the Ambassador, and a budget to run the CD process, and a memorandum detailing GOP priorities for the CD to be approved by the Minister. We understand the memo has gained the support of Secretary of State Cravinho and has been awaiting approval on the Minister's desk since early January. The Embassy and the MFA are aware that several months of its Chairmanship have already passed. Cunha said nothing further can take place without the Minister's approval, noting that at this point it is a "political decision" to move forward. The Embassy has asked that the U.S. go to the Minister "at the highest level" to request movement on the proposals. Cunha panned any idea of reaching out to the MFA at a lower level, because this would only be preaching to the choir, and thus a waste of Embassy time.

POINT OF CONTACT

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¶9. (U) Please contact DRL/MLGA Laura Jordan at (202) 647-3088 or via e-mail for any necessary further background information or argumentation to meet our objectives.

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